



Solicitation Information
January 17, 2013

RFP# 7459258

TITLE: Employment and Income Verification Services

Submission Deadline: February 18, 2013 @ 10:30 AM (Eastern Standard Time)

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at David.Francis@purchasing.ri.gov no later than February 7, 2013 @ 12:00 Midnight (EST). Questions should be submitted in a *Microsoft Word attachment*. Please reference the RFP# on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

SURETY REQUIRED: No

BOND REQUIRED: No

David J. Francis
Interdepartmental Project Manager

Applicants must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at: www.purchasing.ri.gov

Note to Applicants:

Offers received without the entire completed four-page RIVP Generated Bidder Certification Form attached may result in disqualification.

THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS), in accordance with R.I. General Laws 37-2-1 et.seq., is requesting proposals from qualified Vendors to provide employment and income verification services which includes real time access via the internet to employment and income data ,in accordance with the terms of this Request for Proposals and the State's General Conditions of Purchase, which may be obtained at the Rhode Island Division of Purchases Home Page by Internet at www.purchasing.ri.gov. The initial contract period will begin approximately April 1, 2013 for one year. Contracts may be renewed for up to four additional 12-month periods based on vendor performance and the availability of funds.

This is a Request for Proposals, not an Invitation for Bid. Responses will be evaluated on the basis of the relative merits of the proposal, in addition to price; there will be no public opening and reading of responses received by the Division of Purchases pursuant to this Request, other than to name those offerors who have submitted proposals.

INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS TO OFFERORS:

1. Potential vendors are advised to review all sections of this RFP carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.
2. Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this RFP will be rejected as being non-responsive.
3. All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content shall be borne by the vendor. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.
4. Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than sixty (60) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.
5. All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.
6. Proposals misdirected to other state locations, or which are otherwise not present in the Division at the time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and will not be considered. For the purposes of this requirement, the official time and date shall be that of the time clock in the reception area of the Division.
7. It is intended that an award pursuant to this RFP will be made to a prime vendor, or prime vendors in the various categories, who will assume responsibility for all aspects of the work. Joint venture and cooperative proposals will not be considered. Subcontracts are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated in the vendor's proposal and the subcontractor(s) to be used is identified in the proposal.
8. All proposals should include the vendor's FEIN or Social Security number as evidenced by a W9, downloadable from the Division's website at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
9. The purchase of services under an award made pursuant to this RFP will be contingent on the availability of funds.

10. Vendors are advised that all materials submitted to the State for consideration in response to this RFP will be considered to be Public Records as defined in Title 38, Chapter 2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, without exception, and will be released for inspection immediately upon request once an award has been made.
11. Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Division of Purchases website on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP.
12. Equal Employment Opportunity (G.L. 1956 § 28-5.1-1, et seq. – § 28-5.1-1) Declaration of policy – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies to all areas where State dollars are spent, in employment, public services, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation. For further information, contact the Rhode Island Equal Opportunity Office at (401) 222-3090.
13. In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation, a corporation without a Rhode Island business address, shall have the right to transact business in the State until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). This is a requirement only of the successful vendor(s).
14. The vendor should be aware of the State's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) requirements, which address the State's goal of ten percent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information, contact the MBE Administrator at (401) 574-8253 or visit the website www.mbe.ri.gov or contact charles.newton@doa.ri.gov.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS), in accordance with R.I. General Laws 37-2-1 et.seq., is requesting proposals from qualified Vendors to provide employment and income verification services that includes real time access via the internet to employment and income data. The primary goal of real time electronic access to employment and income data is to enable DHS staff to readily and efficiently determine eligibility for DHS programs and benefits; to reduce error rates and to preserve program integrity and quality control through the detection and elimination of fraud. Both on-line access and a batch/data exchange process are essential to obtain real time employment and income verification data to meet program mandates and processing times.

The programs administered by the Rhode Island Department of Human Services include but are not limited to:

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

SNAP benefits supplement the food budgets of Rhode Island families and individuals so they may purchase more and higher quality foods using an EBT card.

- **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF-RI Works)**

This program offers Rhode Island families temporary cash assistance, health coverage, child care assistance, and help finding a job or job training.

- **Low-Income Child Care**

This program helps eligible Rhode Island *working* families *and* cash assistance recipients in the Rhode Island Works Program pay for child care.

- **Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid-RIte Care-CHIP)**

This program, also known as "Medicaid" is a federal and state funded program that pays for medical and health related services for eligible Rhode Islanders.

Although the eligibility requirements for each program differ based on state and federal regulations, each program shares the need to verify employment and income of the individual, family or household applying or recertifying for the benefits associated with these programs.

DHS is seeking to enter into a one year contract with two consecutive options to renew with a qualified Offeror to provide 24/7 real time electronic employment and income verification services to every staff person designated by the department to receive secure access. The contract will be 12 months, scheduled to begin as soon as possible, with two (2), one (1) year options to renew at the State's digression.

SECTION 3: GENERAL SCOPE OF WORK

3.1 Goal

The verification of employment and income data is an integral component of timely, accurate eligibility determination for DHS public assistance programs. It is also essential for DHS staff to have real time access to employment and income data for program integrity to identify and prevent fraud, determine and recover overpayments, and verify data that is relevant to work requirements and participation rates. The Offeror will provide Rhode Island DHS with real time and up-to-date employment and income verification services that will be accessed on-line via the internet.

The Offeror must demonstrate their ability to provide the follow services and deliverables inclusive of 2.2 through 2.3.5.

3.2 Specific Services and Requirements

3.2.1 On-line Data Services

The Employment and Income Verification service provided by the Offeror must:

- Be accessible via the Internet with Microsoft Internet Explorer version 6 or higher.
- Provide secure, high speed internet access to online employment and wage data seven days per week, 24 hours per day.
- Be available 99% of the time other than approved scheduled maintenance periods.
- Allow authorized users to access an individual's employment and wage information using the applicant's Name, Social Security Number and, at a minimum, one other identifier such as address, prior address, date of birth, mother's maiden name, place of employment, or prior place of employment. Regarding search criteria, the Vendor must comply with the provisions of RIGL 6-13.1-29. The State of RI shall not pay for transactions not in conformance with this law.
- Provide an individual's current payroll data defined as an individual's most recent payroll data online that has been updated within ten (10) business days of the individual's last pay day.
- Provide DHS with the wage and employment information necessary to meet DHS needs, including but not limited to: employer name, employer address, employer pay period, employee weekly hours of employment, employee name, employee address, employee SSN, employee date of birth, employee employment status, employee start date, employee end date, employee rate of pay, employee vacation and sick pay, employee gross earnings, employee job title, third party employee medical insurance providers (if available).
- Provide current and/or historical wage and employment information for a 12 to 36 month period.
- Permit users to print a hard copy of the results of the search. This includes the ability to instantaneously print the located information and/or printable response that the information is not in the database.

- Maintain a ten (10) second or less response from the time the DHS worker clicks “submit” for a request to the employment and income verification service system and the system provides a response back to DHS.
- No transaction fee will be imposed for searches that result in no match.
- Provide the data obtained from online access in a format that can be used by an excel program.
- Not require any modification to the Department’s computer systems.
- Utilize secure data transmission using Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP).
- Be accessible by multiple Department staff at one time. The Offeror will provide each staff person authorized to use the system with a secure unique user ID and password. Additional users must be able to be added (or have password reset) without cost to the agency. Additional users must be given access within 2 working days from the time the request is made to the Offeror.
- Have employment and wage data for at least 1000 employers and/or 250,000 individuals.

3.2.2 Batch Data File Services

The Batch Data File service provided by the Offeror must:

- Receive and process data files in standard format with layout to be agreed upon by the Offeror and the Department.
- Return the results of the batch file data run in standard format with layout to be agreed upon by the Offeror and the Department.
- Process the batch file and return the file to DHS within 10 business days of receipt of the batch file.
- Provide a batch file to DHS with the requested individual’s most recent payroll data. The data provided in the batch file must be payroll data that has been updated within ten (10) business days of the individual’s last pay day.
- Provide DHS with the employment and wage information necessary to meet DHS needs, including but not limited to employer name, employer address, employer pay period, employee name, employee address, employee SSN, employee date of birth, employee employment status, employee start date, employee end date, employee rate of pay, employee weekly hours of employment, employee vacation and sick pay, employee gross earnings, employee job title, third party employee medical insurance providers (if available), current and historical wage information.
- Provide end users with an electronic or written copy of the procedures for submitting and receiving electronic data files.
- Utilize secure data transmission when sending and receiving batch using Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP).
- Have employment and wage data for at least 1000 employers and/or 250,000 individuals.

3.3 Project Deliverables

3.3.1 Monthly Activity/Usage Reports

The Offeror will provide DHS with online reporting regarding activity/usage reports. The format, information and content of these reports will be mutually agreed upon between the Offeror and the department, but minimally the reports will include information on successful verifications detailed by office, DHS staff user name and ID number, date of request, last four digits of the employee SSN and the employer's full name and ID number.

3.3.2 Training

The Offeror will ensure DHS staff users have adequate training and resources to effectively utilize the employment and income verification system. The Offeror will conduct a one (1) day train-the-trainer session post award not to exceed six (6) hours at a location in Rhode Island to be determined by DHS. Training will be delivered to a cross representation of program administrators, training, IT and staff users. The training will include, at a minimum, how the database works, log on procedures, navigation through the database, reporting and printing capabilities. The Offeror will regularly notify DHS of updates, enhancements, modifications and system changes in a timely manner. The Offeror will provide training information for all updates, enhancements, modifications and system changes. This training can be delivered via WebEx, PowerPoint or a comparable format that is appropriate for the information to be conveyed and understood by all users. The Offeror will provide user training manuals and easy access to answers to frequently asked questions by users.

3.3.3 Help Desk

The Offeror will provide DHS users with Help Desk Services via a toll free telephone line for the purpose of answering routine questions regarding the database operations, access, log on, and problems related to the database and access by the Department. Help Desk services shall be available Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM -7:00 PM and Saturday from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. All hours are subject to Eastern Standard Time.

3.3.4 Vendor Project Manager

The Offeror will designate an individual to serve as the Project Manager to oversee the implementation of the employment and income verification system as specified in a management project plan and timeline as agreed upon in collaboration with DHS. The Project Manager will serve as the lead and work in collaboration with designated DHS staff leads and be available to discuss day-to-day operations of the project; as well as, attend meetings pertaining to the project. Meeting times and meeting venues to include in-person, phone or other electronic means will be mutually agreed upon between DHS and the Offeror. The Offeror will notify DHS of any change in the Project Manager position as soon as possible, but no more than five (5) days after replacement, and will

ensure the replacement Project Manager has the experience and expertise to oversee the project through to completion.

3.3.5 Expansion of Employer Database

DHS expects that the verification database include small, medium and large employers. At a minimum, the database must include and maintain data on the top twenty (20) of Rhode Island's 100 largest employers as identified by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (www.dlt.ri.gov). Industries and sectors will include those as characterized by the Rhode Island Dept. of Labor and Training as employing the largest number of workers, i.e., health care and social assistance, retail trade, accommodation and food services, education, finance and insurance, manufacturing, government, professional and technical. The Offeror will detail a plan to continually expand the employer database to reflect Rhode Island's employer demographics where 90.4% of employers are classified as small employers with under 20 employees.

SECTION 4: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

4.1 Technical Proposal

4.1.1 Understanding of the Project

The Offeror will demonstrate their understanding of the requirements of the project, scope of work and project schedule. The Offeror should include sufficient detail to convey a thorough understanding of the tasks and deliverables and what DHS is trying to achieve by this RFP.

4.1.2 Qualifications and Experience

- The Offeror will demonstrate their qualifications, experience and expertise to successfully implement this project to include a brief history of the company, organizational chart and past performance in implementing projects of a similar nature and scope delivered in a timely manner within the budget projected.
- The Offeror must include the organization of the Project Team and a roster that identifies the Project Manager and members of the Project Team that will work on this project, and their role on the Project Team. The resumes of the Project Manager and Project Team members must be included. The organizational chart and resumes will be considered attachments and not included in the page limit.
- If the Offeror intends to utilize any subcontractors as part of its proposal, it should also include the same materials for that entity's staff that will be assigned to this project.
- The Offeror must provide letters of recommendation from three (3) public assistance agencies who have used the Offeror's web-based system.

4.1.3 Proposed Project Methodology and Management Plan

The Offeror must describe in detail the methodology they will utilize to meet the requirements and deliverables as detailed in the Scope of Work. This section will include a project/management plan that identifies the work, tasks and time frames necessary to implement this project.

SECTION 5: COST PROPOSAL

5.1 Cost Proposal

- In addition to the Technical Proposal the Offeror must also submit a separate Cost Proposal that reflects all of its proposed costs to the state for the services for employment and income verification services.
- The Offeror will provide in a table format the rate range of costs per successful verification, i.e., the cost for less than 1,000 successful verifications in 500 count increments
- Billing to the State shall be for the previous month based upon usage/transaction hits or volume based upon the rate structure submitted in 500 count increments.

SECTION 6: EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 Evaluation and Review Committee

The State will commission an Evaluation and Review Committee that will evaluate and score all the Technical and Cost Proposals.

6.1.1 Evaluation Criteria for Technical Proposal

The Evaluation Committee will assess each Technical Proposal and may award up to seventy points (70) for the Technical Proposal based on the elements in Section 3 and specified below.

Proposals will be reviewed by a Technical Review Committee comprised of staff from state agencies. To advance to the Cost Evaluation phase, the Technical Proposal must receive a minimum of 49 (70%) out of a maximum of 70 technical points. Any technical proposals scoring less than 49 points will not have the cost component opened and evaluated. The proposal will be dropped from further consideration.

Proposals scoring 49 technical points or higher will be evaluated for cost and assigned up to a maximum of 30 points in cost category, bringing the potential maximum score to 100 points.

The Department of Human Services reserves the exclusive right to select the individual(s) or firm (vendor) that it deems to be in its best interest to accomplish the project as specified herein; and conversely, reserves the right not to fund any proposal(s).

Applicants may be required to submit additional written information or be asked to make an oral presentation before the technical review committee to clarify statements made in their proposal. Applicants may be required to submit additional written information or be asked to make an oral presentation before the Technical Review Committee to clarify statements made in their proposal.

Proposals will be reviewed and scored based upon the following criteria:

Criteria	Possible Points
Offeror's Understanding of the Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the purpose of this RFP, inclusive of Scope of Work and deliverables • Demonstrates understanding of the scope of work and the deliverables and demonstrates the ability to meet it by the Offeror. 	25 Points
Offeror's Qualifications and Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offeror demonstrates experience and history with projects similar in nature and scope, and successful completion and implementation, timely and within budget • Demonstrates the ability to meet the scope of work • Demonstrates the ability to meet all evaluation criteria including the criteria regarding the numbers of employers and employees. • Demonstrates Project Manager and Project Team members have education, experience, and expertise to successfully manage and complete the project and meet the deliverables and scope of work. • Demonstrates Offeror has credentials, experience and expertise to successfully manage project and provide deliverables. • Offeror has provided three (3) references. 	25 Points
Offeror's Methodology and Management Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a methodology that is logical in fulfilling the requirements of the RFP in a timely manner – fits RFP's needs and the methodology matches and contributes to achieving RFP goals • Management and Project Plan represents a logical approach with tasks and timelines to accomplish RFP deliverables • Organization of the Project Team is clear, accountability and lines of communication are clearly defined • Potential issues or problems have been identified and planned for • Offeror already has hardware, software, equipment and licenses necessary to perform the contract 	20 Points
Total Possible Technical Points	70 Points
Cost Calculation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost calculated as lowest responsive cost proposal divided by (this cost proposal) times 30 points 	30 Points
Total Possible Points	100 Points

6.1.2 Evaluation for Cost Proposal

The Cost Proposal, which will be submitted at the same time as its Technical Proposal, will be separate from the latter and will be evaluated separately. The Evaluation Committee will assess each submitted Cost Proposal.

The Low bidder will receive one hundred percent (100%) of the available points for cost. All other bidders will be awarded cost points based upon the following formula:

$$(\text{low bid} / \text{vendors bid}) * \text{available points}$$

For example: If the low bidder (Vendor A) bids \$65,000 and Vendor B bids \$100,000 for monthly cost and service fee and the total points available are Thirty (30), vendor B's cost points are calculated as follows:

$$\$65,000 / \$100,000 * 30 = 19.5$$

Therefore, Vendor A would receive 30 Points and Vendor B would receive 19.5 Points.

SECTION 7: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at David.Francis@purchasing.ri.gov no later than the date and time indicated on page one of this solicitation. Please reference **RFP # 7459258 Employment and Income Verification Services** on all correspondence. Questions should be submitted in a Microsoft Word attachment. Answers to questions received, if any, will be posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information. If technical assistance is required to download, call the Help Desk at (401) 574-9709.

Offerors are encouraged to submit written questions to the Division of Purchases. **No other contact with State parties will be permitted.** Interested Offerors may submit proposals to provide the services covered by this Request on or before the date and time listed on the cover page of this solicitation. Responses received after this date and time, as registered by the official time clock in the reception area of the Division of Purchases will not be considered.

Responses (**an original plus five (5) copies**) should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked "**RFP# 7459258 Employment and Income Verification Services**" to:

RI Dept. of Administration
Division of Purchases, 2nd floor
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5855

NOTE: Proposals received after the above-referenced due date and time will not be considered. Proposals misdirected to other State locations or those not presented to the Division of Purchases by the scheduled due date and time will be determined to be late and will not be considered. Proposals faxed, or emailed, to the Division of Purchases will not be considered. The official time clock is in the reception area of the Division of Purchases.

RESPONSE CONTENTS

Responses shall include the following:

1. A completed and signed four-page R.I.V.I.P generated bidder certification cover sheet downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
2. A completed and signed W-9 downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
3. **A separate Technical Proposal** describing the qualifications and background of the applicant and experience with and for similar projects, and all information described earlier in this solicitation.
4. **A separate, signed and sealed Cost Proposal** reflecting the hourly rate, or other fee structure, proposed to complete all of the requirements of this project.
5. In addition to the multiple hard copies of proposals required, Respondents are requested to provide their proposal in **electronic format (CDRom, diskette, or flash drive)**. Microsoft Word / Excel OR PDF format is preferable. Only 1 electronic copy is requested and it should be placed in the proposal marked "original".

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

Notwithstanding the above, the State reserves the right not to award this contract or to award on the basis of cost alone, to accept or reject any or all proposals, and to award in its best interest.

Proposals found to be technically or substantially non-responsive at any point in the evaluation process will be rejected and not considered further.

During the evaluation process, the State reserves the right, where it deems to serve the state's best interests, to request additional information or clarification from any proposer. At the State's request, Offerors submitting proposals may be requested to make oral presentations as part of the evaluation process.

The State reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and to use any ideas in a proposal regardless of whether that proposal is ultimately selected. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the Offeror, individual, or entity of the conditions contained in this Request For Proposals, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and specifically confirmed by expressed exemption in the contract or Memorandum of Understanding executed by the State and the Offeror selected.

The State has the option, in its sole discretion, to reduce the scope of work for any task or subtask provided for under this RFP. In such event, the offeror understands and agrees that it may not seek any proposed sums from the State as damages or compensation for the State's reduction in the scope of work relating to any program or any department within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). In addition, the State, for any reason, may issue a stop order directing the Offeror ultimately awarded this project to suspend work or operations under this RFP. Resumption of any further work as part of this RFP is then within the sole discretion of the State.